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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9255
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RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 1311
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA 0919
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0312
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0820

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SUBJECT: STP INCUMBENT REELECTED IN MODEL ELECTIONS

REF: LIBREVILLE 494

¶1. On July 31, the National Electoral Committee (NEC) of Sao Tome and Principe announced provisional reports of the July 30 presidential election. Incumbent Fradique de Menezes won by a wide margin, with 60% of the vote, over Patrice Trovoada, who polled 38.6% of the vote. About 1% of ballots were ruled invalid and less than half a percent of voters expressed support for a little-known third candidate. Overseas voters were among the 91,000 registered to vote; over 63% of all registered voters cast a ballot on July 30.

¶2. The results of the election, if not the precise margin, were already evident the night of July 30, as results of each polling place were announced as they arrived at the NEC. The losing candidates both made concession speeches the morning of July 31, without waiting for the final tabulation of results. Trovoada congratulated Menezes and called on all parties to work together to promote stability and the good of the country.

¶3. Ambassador and Emboffs participated in election observation. They noted that election officials and party representatives carried out their duties effectively, benefiting from the experience of legislative elections just four months ago. On July 31, election observers joined in a statement that found the elections fully consistent with international standards. The observers congratulated the government of STP and the NEC for the conduct of elections and the transparency of results.

¶4. Comment: STP's democracy has been notable for its vibrancy, which has sometimes been accompanied by a significant degree of instability. The clear results of this election should help the GoSTP (drawn from the coalition supporting the President) overcome the handicap of minority support in the National Assembly.

WALKLEY